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This collection is one of the first in the field and there will doubtless be many to follow, but there is enough of solid substance in this one to attract the serious student. There is a good index.

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Guide to the Use of United States Government Publications. By EDITH E. CLARKE. (Boston: Boston Book Company. 1918.)

The author of this book writes from a wide experience with public documents, or, as she prefers to call them, government publications. She was for two years, 1896-1898, chief of cataloging in the office of the superintendent of documents, compiler of the *Monthly Catalogs*, of the *Document Catalog*, volumes 1 and 2, and of the *Document Index*, volume 1. She has also been a lecturer on the subject in the Library School of Syracuse University.

It was in a course of lectures that the book had its origin, but it is not in consequence merely a school text. "The work is not intended only as a manual for instruction in library training schools, nor for depository libraries only. It has the needs of depositories, chiefly of those which are public libraries, largely in view, of those which are college libraries somewhat. But the needs of the state libraries and the largest public libraries which maintain documents departments it regards not a whit. It will be seen that in different sections the work addresses itself to very different classes of readers:—now to the immature student of library science; now to the untrained librarian of the very small library; again to the chief of a depository public library; and at another time to anyone interested and influential in directing the policies of the government regarding the public printing." A perusal of the book leads one to wonder why exceptions are made in this statement, for certainly anyone who works with government publications, librarian or reader, might profit by it.

A few brief chapters tell the history of government printing up to 1895, with an account of the organization of the printing office, the distribution of publications, and the beginning of systematic bibliography. Considerably more space is properly given to the period beginning with the printing law of 1895, according to which the printing office is now conducted. In this connection the author takes up the recommendations of the Keep and the printing investigation commissions and urges their adoption. Only in this way can the present

unbusinesslike methods be abolished. A list of publications relating to the latter commission is included in the bibliographical appendices.

There is a widespread tendency among readers and even among librarians to look upon public documents as in a class by themselves, to be approached with trepidation and only in case of necessity. Miss Clarke contends that they are no more mysterious than any other printed matter, and require no different treatment in distribution, cataloging or use. Her chapters on legislative and executive publications explain the forms in which they appear, the system of numbering and the proper method of citation. It may be noted here that incorrect citation is the root of much of the trouble in securing documents in libraries. Acquaintance with this chapter would smooth the path of many a searcher in documentary material. The classified list of publishing bodies to be found in this section of the book should also be a valuable guide to the uninitiated.

The last section of the book, *Library Practice*, obviously concerns librarians only, giving suggestions for the acquisition, classification and cataloging of documents. This is supplemented by an interesting list of references to articles in library journals and proceedings, called *Librarians on the National Publications*.

A work of this kind, covering a considerable number of topics and addressed to many classes of readers, is almost necessarily disconnected, a feature which does not encourage continuous reading. But as a reference book and general guide to the subject it is alone in the field and plainly indispensable to anyone whose work is among government publications.

ROLLIN A. SAWYER, JR.

New York Public Library.

Departmental Cooperation in State Government. By A. R. ELLINGWOOD. (New York: The Macmillan Company. 1918. Pp. 300.)

It is necessary at the outset to point out that the title of this book does not accurately describe its contents. It deals with only one phase of departmental coöperation and is not confined to state government. A more accurate title would be "The History and Practice of the Advisory Opinion." The author traces the history of the advisory opinion, beginning with England in the twelfth century down through its development in the United States, Canada, and the Central and